Pictures From Power Central

Photographer Michael Evans and His White House Yearbook

By Lois Romano
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Says Michael Evans, one of four men in history to be the official White House photographer: "I was just turning away to wash my hands in the White House men's room one day when in walks this unnamed Cabinet member, obviously in a great deal of hurry. So I started telling him about my Portrait Project, and there just was *no* way he was going to get by me unless he agreed to sit for it. He was jumping all over the place, and I just stood in his way until he agreed . . . That's the sort of thing I had go through. Not as glamorous as it appears, hmmm?"

Michael Evans is the president's personal photographer, a job that requires him to be both ubiquitous and invisible. He's the one White House staff member who must be on the scene for every private meeting, while never being noticed. At 40, he has the conservative presence of a K Street lawyer, with his gray flannels, white button-down shirt and neatly graying hair. His is a demeanor and look not unlike that of the people he must photograph daily in the White House, but strikingly different from that of his most famous predecessor, David Hume Kennerly, who would show up in Jerry Ford's Oval Office wearing blue jeans.

"Someone wrote once that if Kennedy was like a son to Ford, I'm like the president's nephew," says Evans. "That's an accurate assessment of our relationship."

In the past four years, his portfolio has come to include pictures of then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig informing Reagan that Anwar Sadat was indeed dead; Reagan's look of horror as the CIA briefed him on the downing of the Korean Air Lines jet by Soviet fighter planes; and many quiet personal moments between Ronald and Nancy Reagan. There are also the shots he missed and doesn't like to remember. "When there's something like an assassination attempt," he says, "you just hope you don't disgrace yourself."

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